

# LANIOTURDUS

SWA/NAMIBIA VOGELKLUB  
eine Zweigstelle der  
SWA Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft  
und der  
Southern African Ornithological  
Society

Newsletter of the SWA/Namibia Bird Club  
Mitteilungen des SWA/Namibia Vogelklubs  
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Beiträge bitte an den Redakteur des LANIOTURDUS p.A. SWA Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft, Postfach 67, Windhoek, 9000 senden.

Mitgliedsbeiträge für die S.A.O.S. und die Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft für 1986 sind wie folgt:

Mitgliedschaft SWA Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft und  
SWA/Namibia Vogelklub R 25-00 pro Jahr  
Mitgliedschaft SWA Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft und  
der Southern African Ornithological Society R 26-00 pro Jahr

Als ein Ordentliches Mitglied von sowohl der S.A.O.S. als auch der SWA Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft, erhalten Sie die populärwissenschaftliche Zeitschrift BOKMAKIERIE, das wissenschaftlich ausgerichtete Journal OSTRICH und ebenfalls die lokalen Mitteilungen LANIOTURDUS, weiteres Informationsmaterial und die allgemeinen Publikationen der SWA Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft.

Als Ortsgruppen-Mitglied des SWA/Namibianischen Vogelklubs stehen Ihnen der LANIOTURDUS, sowie die Mitteilungen und zusätzliche Informationen der SWA Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft zu.

### Bemerkungen an Mitarbeiter:

Manuskripte sollten mit Schreibmaschine (oder in gut leserlicher Handschrift) geschrieben sein und zwar mit doppeltem Zeilenabstand auf A4 (30 x 21 cm) Format.

Skizzen, Karten und Tabellen sollten auf weissem Qualitätspapier mit schwarzer Tinte gezeichnet werden.

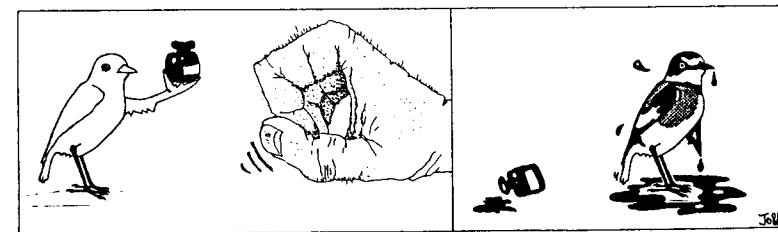
Klare Schwarz-weiss-Photographien (15 x 20 cm) können eingereicht werden, um die Arbeit zu illustrieren.

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### 1. "CREATIONISM"

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African Skimmers have been identified as strong candidates for the proposed SWA/Namibia Red Data List for birds (Williams & Brown 1985). The southern African population is small and decreasing. Skimmers no longer breed at St Lucia in Natal, and the Kariba Dam has flooded much potential habitat upstream and at the same time reduced river flow and suitable conditions downstream. Health and agricultural authorities issue and/or permit the use of quantities of pesticides and other chemicals potentially harmful to piscivorous (fish-eating) birds along the banks of the Zambezi, Kwando and Okavango river systems. In addition to these man-made hazards, the skimmers face many natural dangers. Several species of snakes, lizards and birds are known to take eggs and young nestlings. Eggs and chicks may be crushed by crocodiles and hippopotamuses, or washed away by waves (including those caused by boats), or by sudden floods.

The sandbanks where skimmers breed are usually devoid of vegetation and thus directly open to the full effect of the sun. If the parents are kept off the eggs or small chicks, the embryos or chicks may die from over-heating. Droughts which severely reduce water levels may enable terrestrial predators to cross to the sandbanks. During rainy seasons there may not be any sandbanks available for breeding. In all, the African Skimmer would appear to be leading an increasingly precarious existence!

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#### POSTSCRIPT

[Wilton Raats and Roy Jones (Nature Conservation Officers) found 29 dead African Skimmer nestlings on one of the major sandbanks in the Okavango River, within the Mahango Game Reserve, in September this year (C.Hines personal communication). Cause of death was unknown, but it was suspected that the nestlings died of over-heating as a result of human disturbance. Ed.]

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#### BURYING OF EXCESS FOOD BY BLACK CROWS

During August 1986 at Sesriem in the Namib-Naukluft Park, two Black Crows Corvus capensis were seen burying food in the sand.

After throwing table scraps out for this pair of birds, they consumed a portion of the food and then proceeded to bury the remainder at various spots in the surrounding sandy terrain. The following day they were seen to retrieve all the buried food and consume it. This behaviour was observed repeatedly throughout the duration of our two-week visit to Sesriem. On further inquiry we established that similar behaviour has been observed in Pied Crows Corvus albus at Mōwe Bay in the Skeleton Coast Park (P. Bridgeford, personal communication). We have been unable to find any records of similar behaviour by these birds elsewhere.

Perhaps the large flock of Pied Crows in the Sesriem area (and the enormous competition for food in this arid region) has led to the Black Crows having to adopt this unusual behaviour.

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## Notes and News

## Bemerkungen & Mitteilungen

#### SUCCESSFUL RELEASE OF A FLEDGLING MOUNTAIN CHAT

A well-feathered Mountain Chat Oenanthe monticola nestling (about ten days old) was recently brought in by a cat, on the outskirts of Windhoek. The chat had a fracture of the tarsus just above the 'foot'. The fracture was set using masking tape, and it healed in five days, leaving an obvious callous.

The nestling was hand-fed on a roughly two-hourly basis, in response to vigorous begging behaviour and vocalization. The chat was fed mince, mealworms and a vitamin-mineral supplement. After ten days in captivity, the chat started to explore its environment, jumping in and out of the nest-box. Shortly thereafter the chat was transferred to an outside aviary where it fed itself, though begged for food (and received it!) whenever a human was present. This begging behaviour slowly diminished, and about ten days later (probably 25 - 30 days of age) the chat was considered independent.

The chat was released at Avis Dam in November and has subsequently been resighted on a few occasions.

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